

Washington, D.C. - Today, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report finding serious problems with the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on students identified as English language learners.

Congressman Charles Gonzalez released the following statement:

"GAO's findings show how the U.S. Department of Education has failed to meet its obligations in implementing provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act aimed at limited English proficient (LEP) students.

It has been found that the Department of Education has not provided states with clear instructions on how to collect data on how many students they have with limited English proficiency. Therefore, states are reporting inconsistent data, which is causing the Department to misallocate funding throughout the states. This misallocation could significantly impact the resources available to states and school districts as they work to educate English language learners. English proficiency is essential in our society if a person is to achieve his or her full potential.

There is no doubt that LEP students continue to be neglected and short-changed in our education system. Success in school is dependent upon, and should include, developing English language proficiency. How can we expect the roughly 5 million LEP students in our nation's classrooms to meet their academic potential if we do not provide them the opportunity to master the language in which they are taught? We are indeed setting them up for failure.

As a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Education Task Force, I am committed to addressing and correcting the weaknesses of NCLB and its implementation during its reauthorization process in the 110th Congress.

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